

least one means defining an opening therein, and further recites means defining eyelets on said flooring panels, each said opening at least partially receiving one of said eyelets, and said cables passing through respective ones of said eyelets on said flooring. Although not discussed at the interview, claim 21, as amended, also more clearly recites a floor on the cables, and the clause to the sections being arranged in side-by-side relation longitudinally of the cables removed as resultingly superfluous. As amended, claim 25 contains similar recitations.

Claims 23, 24, and 27 have been amended to conform. Claims 28 to 33 are newly submitted. Since, as amended and as newly submitted, there are 13 claims including 2 independent claims, no additional claims fee is occasioned by this Amendment.

The present invention is directed to the combination of a working platform or scaffolding attached to a bridge and to a method for supporting persons performing work on the bridge by providing such scaffolding attached to the bridge.

An important objective of the present invention is to provide a working platform below the bridge deck which is quick, easy, and economical to erect and later dismantle and is safe. In order to achieve this objective, in accordance with the present invention, a plurality of cables are secured at their ends to the bridge such as at bridge piers to extend longitudinally along the bridge and at a desired distance below the bridge portion to be worked on. Then, a floor comprising a plurality of flooring panels is erected on the cables with the panels extending transversely and resting on the cables. The panels are releasably secured to the cables by means of an opening in each panel and an eyelet means received at least partially in each opening, the cables being received in the eyelet means.

The individual releasable flooring panels are also provided,

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in accordance with the present invention, to allow convenient and quick access through the flooring of the platform in emergency situations, such as if a worker becomes seriously ill or injured and needs to be lowered safely to the ground below.

Potin discloses a work platform erected under a bridge and having cables strung between travelers which are disposed on opposite sides of the bridge and planks placed over and across the cables. As seen in Fig. 7 thereof, the planks, which are interlocked together, have keepers 26 on their undersides, and the cables are disposed within the space between the keepers and the planks. It is apparent from Fig. 7 that this does not provide a very secure attachment of a plank to a cable.

Sturgis discloses a suspension bridge wherein flooring planks, illustrated at 35 of Sturgis, are laid upon joist-cables, illustrated at 14 of Sturgis. The joist-cables are stretched between the shore ends of the bridge and attached to dead-men, illustrated at 12 of Sturgis, which, as illustrated in Fig. 1 of Sturgis, are embedded in the earth. The flooring planks are "united firmly together" by stringers or rails, illustrated at 36 of Sturgis, which are laid upon and fastened to the flooring planks and by hook-bolts, illustrated at 37 of Sturgis, which pass through the stringers and certain of the planks and have their hooks engaged with the joist-cables. See page 3, lines 24 to 41, of Sturgis.

As discussed at the interview, Potin and Sturgis do not disclose or suggest the releasable securing of a plurality of panels to cables by means of an opening in each panel and an eyelet means received at least partially in each opening, the cables being received in the eyelet means. Neither do Potin or Sturgis disclose or suggest securing of the cables to the bridge to erect a platform which is in addition to the bridge deck.

Neither Potin or Sturgis or any other of the references of

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record, whether taken together or individually, discloses, teaches, or suggests a combination of a bridge and a platform attached to the bridge (or a method for supporting persons performing work on a bridge) which comprises a platform below a deck of the bridge wherein a plurality of cables are extended along the bridge and attached to the bridge, a floor comprising a plurality of flooring panels each extending transversely of the cables and resting on the cables, and the flooring panels are releasably secured to the cables by means of an opening in each panel and an eyelet means received at least partially in each opening, the cables being received in the eyelet means, as claimed in each of claims 21 to 33, as amended and as newly submitted, in order that a temporary platform for supporting persons performing work on the bridge may easily and economically use the bridge structure itself for support while providing easy, quick, safe, and economical erection and dismantling and to further allow quick and convenient access through the flooring in emergency situations. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 21 to 33, as amended and as newly submitted, are novel and unobvious over the prior art and therefore patentable.

Since each of the claims, as amended and as newly submitted, has been shown to be patentable, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and such is respectfully requested. If it would aid in advancing this application to issue, the Examiner is respectfully urged to call the undersigned attorney for Applicant at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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